



**Meeting with the City of Milwaukee  
Tuesday, November 17, 2004, 2:00 – 3:30pm**

People in attendance

Doug Dalton, WisDOT BOP

Casey Newman, WisDOT BOP

Arun Rao, WisDOT BOP

Aileen Switzer, WisDOT, District 2

Bob Greenstreet, City of Milwaukee, Department of City Development

John Hyslop, City of Milwaukee, Department of City Development

Allison Rozek, City of Milwaukee, Department of City Development

Mike Maierle, City of Milwaukee, Department of City Development

Jeff Mantes, City of Milwaukee, Department of Public Works

Jeff Polenske, City of Milwaukee, Department of Public Works

Clark Wantoch, City of Milwaukee, Department of Public Works

Chris Fornal, City of Milwaukee, Department of Public Works

Dave Windsor, City of Milwaukee, Department of Public Works

Lois Gresl, City of Milwaukee, Department of Public Works

Bob Bryson, City of Milwaukee, Department of Public Works

Dan Boehm, Milwaukee County Transit System

Ken Yunker, Southeaster Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

- 1) Overview of WisDOT's meeting purpose and WisDOT's long-range plan, *Connections 2030*, by WisDOT staff: The meeting began at 2:00. Casey Newman, WisDOT, gave an overview of WisDOT's long-range plan *Connections 2030*. WisDOT is seeking input on transportation planning issues from larger Wisconsin cities at this point. *Connections 2030* is scheduled to be completed in 2006.
- 2) Gathering of input from City of Milwaukee: Staff from the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County Transit, and SEWRPC gave the following comments.
  - Work on the City of Milwaukee Comprehensive Plan will start in 2005. The City will use technical working groups for different aspects of the plan with point people from various organizations (SEWRPC, WisDOT, etc.). The plan will take 3 to 5 years to complete.
  - Other plans include a redevelopment plan, downtown plan, Park East plan, and a Menominee Valley plan.

**Roads/ System Operations**

- City staff stated that for the Milwaukee region, “system operations” is more important than facility expansion needs. There is little room for road expansion. City staff stated that the only way to manage system performance is through system operations, rather than building new capacity. Funding options need to be available for system operations. This needs to be a specific element in any plan.
- City staff stated that the WisDOT Facilities Design Manual should better reflect urban roadways versus focusing on rural roads, and that the standards need more flexibility in an urban environment. Standards should be more urban friendly (context sensitive design, etc). For example, the fact that grades and slopes on cross sections (sidewalks, driveways) are restricted to a certain area in the cities should be considered.
- City staff emphasized that their approach to roads is preservation first, and expansion of the system only as a last choice.

#### **Economic Development:**

- Attendees felt that WisDOT uses economic development as justification for highway expansions. The city noted that economic development is just as important in urban areas as rural. In the city, parking lots get converted into mixed use. The City needs adequate transit to facilitate this economic development. They would like WisDOT to support enabling legislation for greater options for economic development.

#### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Issues**

- Milwaukee has had a Safe Walks to School program, but with very limited resources. The program looked at 6 pilot schools. Safe Routes to School has been going on to some extent for a long time in Milwaukee. The Milwaukee public schools, police department, and public works department have been emphasizing safe crossings, etc.
- Staff emphasized that bicycle and pedestrian issues should NOT be an afterthought in WisDOT projects.

#### **Local Roads**

- City staff noted that when WisDOT improves a roadway, it cuts away from Surface Transportation Program (STP) urban funding and cuts away from local Roads. The City would like to see WisDOT treat local roads as a complete system with maintenance and operations included.
- City staff would like to see some of WisDOT’s investment priorities change. They feel that WisDOT puts resources behind the most expensive option. Staff noted that in urban areas, urban and state systems are in effect the same. Staff emphasized the need to look at the whole system including smaller roads. For example, Canal Street doesn’t get on the radar screen, and yet it carries a lot of people to

downtown Milwaukee. Staff suggested that WisDOT “think streets, not just highways.”

- Staff stated that WisDOT should serve car trips through many alternatives. City roads have very limited funding, while State programs fund state trunk highway improvements.

### **Transportation and Land Use Issues**

- City staff suggested that an alternative way of dealing with issues is to think more “fine-grained.” The City wants development and local trips on arterials. Staff stated that the biggest policy issue is how transportation affects development. One attendee explained: the State is a series of dots, and WisDOT connects the dots. How does this relate to urban development? For example, a priority is building Highway 164 because it helps connect dots, but it’s a “sprawlway.” Staff suggested that this is not a good way to develop the city or improve highways.

### **Regional planning**

- City staff noted that all areas of the state are not the same and should not necessarily be treated as equals; every city, town, etc. doesn’t need to be treated in the same way. For example, a Milwaukee ITS project was halted because statewide equality was required for funding ITS projects and this Milwaukee project was not considered a statewide project.

### **Aesthetics**

- Attendees stated that WisDOT needs to focus more on aesthetics. Milwaukee had a hard time upgrading the 6th Street and Wisconsin Avenue viaducts (the city had to provide more funds). Staff noted that the state benefits from aesthetics in terms of tourism and quality of life.

### **Freight Issues**

- City staff noted that the ports are well connected.
- Staff would like to see more freight moved by trains. They expressed the need to get some trucks off the freeways, and recommended that this be discussed in the Connections 2030 plan.

### **Road Design Suggestions**

- When designing Roadways, a certain percentage of trucks and intersection size should be considered.
- FDM design standards that deal with trucks turning in urban areas need to consider buildings in urban areas. Design standards are too rural based now.

- WisDOT should look at other options such as roundabouts. Non-traditional design standards and other features would work better for urban areas.

### **Transit**

- Attendees support regional authority and dedicated funding
- Attendees would like to see a higher emphasis on transit. They feel that WisDOT has not had this as a priority in terms of funding, and that WisDOT treats transit as a local issue.
- Transit staff stated that they won't be building anything and that transit will continue deteriorating, unless there is dedicated funding.
- Staff noted that buses have been eliminated, there are fewer frequencies, and at the same time road improvements are made because of travel times, etc. This is a great criterion for highways, but it should also be used for transit. One set of rules should not apply to roads, and have no value for transit.
- WisDOT should give transit issues equality with highways in terms of providing funding.
- Transit staff pointed out that the County line is hard border for transit to get across. This reemphasizes the need to address transit, including funding, from a regional perspective.

### **Other Issues**

- The City is excited about the new Amtrak station at Mitchell Airport.
- The Lake Express Ferry across Lake Michigan appears to be a success.
- Docking facilities for lake cruise ships are in the plans for ports.